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ABSTRACT

Schools throughout New Jersey are embracing character education programs. A study conducted in the fall and winter of 2001-2002 at a school in Hillsborough Township, New Jersey, assessed student behavior over a 20-week period, focusing on four classes of second graders (n=75) during their recess period. Surveys addressing student communication and social awareness were given to students, their teachers, and lunch aides at the beginning of the study in the fall of 2001. After 20 weeks of daily mini-lessons dealing with the character traits of respect, responsibility, kindness, and integrity, the surveys were taken again in February 2002. Analysis of the results indicated a modest increase in positive student behaviors. Appended are sample surveys. (Contains 3 tables and 15 references.) (Author/BT)

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Character Education and Student Behavior

Addressing Expressive Communication and Social Behavior in 2nd Grade Students.

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SO 034 370

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Abstract

Schools all over New Jersey are embracing character education programs. This study assessed students' behavior over a twenty-week period focusing on second graders during their recess period. Surveys addressing student communication and social awareness was given to students, their teachers, and lunch aides at the beginning of this study in the Fall. After twenty weeks of daily mini lessons dealing with the character traits of respect, responsibility, kindness, and integrity, the surveys were taken again. Analysis of the results indicated a modest increase in students' positive behaviors.

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I would like to extend my appreciation to all the families who have been supportive of me through my research endeavor. My husband and children were patient with me and I thank you for always generously allowing me my time on the computer. I thank my College of New Jersey family, for without their constant encouragement this work would not have come to fruition. Lastly, I thank the students, teachers and lunch aides of the second grade at Auten Road Elementary School in Hillsborough, New Jersey.

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CHAPTER 1

The Problem

Many school age children do not have the communication and social skills that are necessary to handle conflicts that arise throughout their school day. This lack of expressive communication as well as social behavior can take learning time away for them and the rest of their peers not only in the classroom but can effect the behavior of students when they are out of the classroom setting.

Recess is the only time of day children can interact with one another in an outdoor/indoor environment without the watchful eye of their teacher. It is also the time of day when most student conflicts occur and the adult supervision, (hired lunch aides) have to make swift decisions on how to control the situations that ensue. Consequences for students who are at fault or who the adults think are at fault, are either handled at the time of the incident with a time out, or is brought to the teacher's attention at the end of the recess period. There may even be times when a student will need to see the school principal for the misbehavior or will be placed in the office instead of joining his/her classmates for recess. When incidents such as these occur the teacher cannot ignore the situation but will have to sometimes conduct a mini lesson once they are back in the classroom on how to get along with one another.

Teachers of young elementary school children spend a better part of their day dealing with emotional and social issues in their classes. They also have to try to solve the friction between the students after their recess period as well. Educators usually end up lecturing about the same behavior issues again and again. A main concern of educators is that well meaning and concerned parents do not have the time or energy to teach and practice correct social skills because of the little time left to spend with their family at the end of working day. Many parents are too lenient and tired at the end of their day and are quick to give in to their children.

A character education program throughout a school could make a difference in the way children conduct themselves with one another when conflicts happen. A curriculum that deals with responsibility, respect, kindness and integrity would enable the students to play and work together using these character traits as a part of their daily lives.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of a character education program on student behavior of four second - grade classes especially during their lunch and recess period. More specifically, this study's objective was to determine if students regard one another with respect, kindness, integrity and take

responsibility for their own actions. This investigation was part of a broader context in which this school district has a two year goal objective to discuss, teach and embrace a character education program to its students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. The study evaluated student behavior early in the school year as well as surveying student behaviors again in the month of February.

Guiding Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the common negative student behaviors that luch aides encounter with second graders during recess?
2. To what extent were these negative student behaviors minimized as a result of the character education program?
3. How do the second grade teachers characterize the student behaviors?
4. To what extent were teachers able to begin instruction immediately after recess?

Operational Definitions

In this study the phrase "positive behavior" was used to mean a display of kindness, honesty, good manners, and respect toward others. The phrase "negative behavior" was used to mean a display of rudeness, unfriendly and dishonest conduct toward others.

Delimitations

This study did not include all the students of the school. The study did not include student behavior outside of the school.

Assumptions

The primary assumption of this study was that students would participate in the study consistently. It was further assumed that the program and lessons would have a positive effect on student behavior in the classroom after recess and this positive behavior would carry through to the students' home environment.

Significance of the Study

This study was of a benefit to me as a classroom teacher now and as an educational leader in the future. Character education is a needed approach to helping students communicate with their peers more effectively. Once given the tools to avoid or quickly diffuse situations that may get out of hand, students will be able to apply the lessons learned and continue what they are doing at recess without adverse consequences. Teachers and administrators can spend a considerable amount of time during any given school day in the discipline area. A

character education program that embraces the values of responsibility, respect, kindness and integrity can lead toward a decline in student discipline action. That decline would lead to positive behavior reports given to the teacher, and as a result teachers would not have to take any learning time away from their class after recess to lecture a group or an individual.

My colleagues benefited from this study and its program as well since all second grade students do leave their classroom every day and spend time in another area of the school with specialized teachers. The students have art, music, physical education, Spanish, and library where many student issues arise at those given times. These teachers were aware of the program and were able to remind or compliment the students on their behavior.

An added benefit of this study was that the students' parents were aware of the program and of this study through a school communication. They were given the opportunity to attend a workshop on the character education program. This in turn benefited the school and students because their parents were able to use the same terminology used by their teachers and administrators in school. Parental support reinforced the school's character education objective.

Another benefit, which could be long term, is that the positive character traits can become an every day occurrence. When students feel good about themselves, good self- esteem can result in positive school performance. The

children have acquired skills that will be a part of which they are for the rest of their lives.

Review of the Literature

Character education is as old as education itself. Teddy Roosevelt once said, "to educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society", (Greenawalt, 1996). Character education is not an innovative trend in our nation's schools, but rather it has re-emerged as a needed curriculum to be integrated into everyday occurrences that happen throughout a school day. Defined by Diane McIntyre Wilber, character education is an integrated, intentional effort to help students understand, develop, and use commonly accepted ethical values such as honesty, respect and responsibility (2000). Elementary school children are very easily affected and with the right guidelines from family as well as school they could learn how to solve their conflicts before they escalate. Play is a very important part of a child's social and physical development; but the playtime known as "recess" in most schools can also become a distressing time for many children. Their classmates may not have been taught certain moral values from home such as kindness, honesty, compassion or even right from wrong.

Purpose

The purpose of the review was to analyze and synthesize the literature related to character education programs in schools and to determine if it leads to

the students' positive overall behavior. Specifically, this review addressed the questions:

1. Is there a need in schools today for a program that embraces the teaching of values and morals?
2. How does a character education program affect the students' social behavior and academic achievement ?

History

The history of character education is discussed in a position paper written by Charles Greenawalt (1996). He takes the reader on a journey from the American Revolution through to the 1990's. Leaders from the revolution period believed that schools had a responsibility to develop students' values. In the nineteenth century students learned the importance of honesty, hard work, self-discipline, responsibility, respect, caring and citizenship. By the mid nineteen hundreds this value teaching was given up to make way for other curricula and was taught only by the discretion of the individual teacher. This position paper gives good reasons why our American schools have brought back the teachings of character education. Polls were taken in 1989 and parents favored conducting a traditional character education curriculum.

Character Education Programs

Diane McIntyre Wilber writes about one of the ways in which character education was brought back into the schools of Missouri beginning in 1988 under a coalition known as Personal Responsibility Education Process (PREP). Her article talks about the successes of the program and how it spread into the other central states. Improvements were noted in the school culture, behavior, academic achievement, peer interaction and parent involvement. (2000)

McGraw Hill Publishers and Business Week have published a booklet citing ten schools as their award recipients of 1998 for being "Schools of Character". Schools across the country were spotlighted because of their success of integrating character education into the lives of their students. This report is a good comparison of how each school implemented their own program and is also a good comparison of the school size, grades and whether it is in a rural, urban or suburban area.(1998)

Dr. Marlow Ediger writes in his position paper that in order for students to achieve in the arena of character education, pupil motivation and attitude is important for the program to succeed. He also states that students need to be involved in their own evaluation. Dr. Ediger has a good argument for not giving rewards to students for good behavior. He believes the more you reward for good behavior, the less interest there is in being good which may lead to students not

thinking of themselves as being caring individuals (1998). Intrinsic motivation is what Dr. Ediger believes is the key to having students achieve well in cognition and in character education.

School Recess and Peer Conflicts

An article discussing primary school children and recess written by Susan Thompson stresses the importance of unstructured playtime as helping children develop emotionally and socially. This is also a period of their day that can help raise their self-confidence. This article dealt with classroom meetings of first graders and their teacher and third graders and their teacher to find out what bothers the students during recess and how they might feel when not included in games (1997). This article gives insight into what goes on in a young child's mind emotionally as the teacher took the students through a role playing activity of what could transpire when students are not included in a group activity during free play time. Ms. Thompson gives good suggestions to colleagues who encounter negative recess behaviors. negative recess behaviors.

Another piece of literature which supports teaching character education in schools is a research report indicating that students do have more problems involving peer conflict and problems involving exclusion during their recess time. Seven specific student complaints were investigated including peer conflict (being

teased, being in fights, being in arguments), social isolation (not being allowed to join in a group, losing a friend, playing alone), and play enjoyment. A three month study described the nature and frequency of students' self-reported recess problems. The grades involved in this research were third, fourth and fifth. This study only involved student complaints and did not address any solutions for school or staff. It was more of a study of social adjustment.

Summary and Implications

After reviewing literature on character education curriculum in schools, the majority of what is written is in favor of our nation's schools adopting some sort of character education program. Family should be the first source children learn from, however, many families are not around long enough in a given day to sit down and have discussions or read books together. When values are not instilled at home, it is no wonder children do not have the ability to solve peer conflicts that arise during a school day. Many hostilities and/or aggressions may come out during their unstructured recess time and children are not even aware they are acting out in a negative way. This is when it must be up to the schools to take over or supplement what is taught at home and model to children how to respect one another, be kind and care for one another and tolerate our differences.

Conclusion

A character education program appropriate for the school can only be a positive addition to any school curriculum. Many teachers feel they already have too much to teach during a school day but how much of that day is interrupted due to conflicts that arise between students. If a teacher and school would incorporate lessons of character into the planning of a day the consistency of character teachings would begin to filter through to the majority of the school body. The school should have the support of its parents and community in order for a good character education program to carry on. Parents need to be informed from the start of a new initiative with letters to go home about the program as well as school meeting to explain the program, its need and its hopeful outcomes.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Context

This study was conducted in Hillsborough Township, New Jersey, which is in the county of Somerset. The area of Hillsborough is comprised of mostly middle to upper middle income families who live in private homes, townhouses, condominiums and/or apartments. An area within the school district is transient including a large number of families who do not speak English but are supportive of the teachers and the school community. The school district consists of approximately 7500 students divided into one large high school, one large middle school and seven elementary schools. The per pupil expenditure for the school year 2000 – 2001 in district is $7796.00 which is below the New Jersey state average of $8809.00.

Participants

This study took place within the Auten Road Elementary School facility. There are approximately 580 students in the school and approximately 75 of these students from the second grade were the population in this research study. The purpose of my study was to examine how student behavior is affected at their

recess time after students have had experience in social and communicative skills through a character education curriculum. The target population was the boys and the girls in the four - second grade classes. There were also four - second grade classroom teachers and four lunch aides who participated in this study.

Research Design

This study began at the beginning of the school year in October, 2001 with a brief questionnaire that was given to the second grade teachers to determine what they see and hear while observing their students' behavior toward one another in the classroom as well as after recess. The sampling of behavior was compared at the end of twenty weeks with the same brief questionnaire. This study was conducted using behavior rating scales as well as surveys. The behavior rating scale was given to the students' teachers in the Fall term and again in the Winter session during the month of February. The lunch aides who oversee the students at recess were given a different behavior rating scale. A shortcoming of a numerical behavior rating scale is that different observers may have different ideas about the meaning of the terms that the numbers represent.

The student population in this study is considered to be in the primary grade and therefore needed a user- friendly type of survey to answer simple questions regarding their behavior and attitudes toward one another. The Pictorial Attitude

Scale for Use with Young Children was used. The pictorial rating scale was easier for the students to answer by placing a line under a face that indicated how they feel about a topic or question.

Data Collection Measures

The method of direct administration was used because all of the participants were in one place; the school. The instruments used in collecting the data for this study needed to be clearly defined to the participants due to their young age. The surveys were administered to students, teachers and lunch aides in a given week.

This researcher obtained the permission of the parents of the second grade students before this study began. The study consisted of permission letters that went home with all second grade students.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Findings

This section presents the results and findings of analyses of the data. These results are presented by research question.

Common Negative Student Behaviors Lunch Aides Encounter During Recess

The lunch aides were surveyed twice during the school year to determine how the second grade classes interacted with one another during their recess time. The negative behavior that stood out in the first survey was students teasing their friends in the other classes at recess. Another negative behavior that stood out after the first survey was taken was student behavior during indoor recess. During inclement weather the students cannot go outside and must stay in their classroom after eating their lunch in the cafeteria. After twenty weeks of discussions, mini lessons, role playing, and using words like truthful, respectful, kindness, etc., the analyses of the data given by the four lunch aides, showed a decrease in playground behavior as well as a decrease in indoor recess behavior. The negative playground behavior indicated by the lunch aides took place when the students had to wait their turn on playground equipment. There was a 50% decrease in this behavior and a 50% decrease in the indoor recess behavior (See Table 1).

Is The Teacher Able To Start Immediate Instruction After Recess?

According to the analyses of the teacher survey, 50% of the classes do not come back to class after recess ready for instruction. The data shows that 25% of the classes (one class) does not always come back to the class with a positive behavior report from the lunch aide. This in turn impacts the teacher's instruction time (See Table 2).

How Students Interact and Communicate With One Another

The analysis of the Student Character Education survey indicated an increase in second grade student communication and social skills. In regard to speaking kindly and politely toward one another, as well as admitting their mistakes to one another, the data showed a slight increase; however, in regard to welcoming new students the data indicated a large increase in positive social behavior. The student data indicated that the second graders are aware that teasing others who are different is not all right, however they did show a small positive increase in their response to that particular statement (See Table 3).

Do Teachers Notice A Difference in Student Behavior at Recess?

Teachers are aware of the positive language students use to explain conflicts that arise with one another from their recess period. The teachers have also noticed

a slight increase in the amount of time they sometimes need to take away from their instruction period right after the students' recess due to the negative behavior reports from the lunch aide. Statement D indicated that 50% of the classes decreased to the teacher rarely having speak to the students after recess from never having to speak to them after recess. (See Table 2 & 3)

Second Grade Lunch Aides Recess Survey

October 2001	Class 1					Class 2					Class 3					Class 4					TOTALS				
Lunch Aides Survey Questions A to E	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always
A. My class speaks kindly to one another.			1						1					1						1	0	0	1	2	1
B. My class follows the outdoor recess rules.			1					1						1					1		0	0	2	2	0
C. My class observes indoor recess rules.			1						1						1					1	0	0	1	1	2
D. My class teases the other classes at recess.	1					1							1					1			2	0	2	0	0
E. My class can wait their turn at recess.			1					1							1					1	0	0	2	0	2

February 2002	Class 1					Class 2					Class 3					Class 4					TOTALS				
Lunch Aides Survey Questions A to E	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always
A. My class speaks kindly to one another.			1					1						1						1	0	0	2	1	1
B. My class follows the outdoor recess rules.			1					1						1					1		0	0	2	2	0
C. My class observes indoor recess rules.			1						1					1					1		0	0	1	3	0
D. My class teases the other classes at recess.	1					1							1					1			2	0	2	0	0
E. My class can wait their turn at recess.	1						1						1						1		1	1	1	1	0

Second Grade Teacher Recess Survey

October 2001	Class 1					Class 2					Class 3					Class 4					TOTALS				
Teacher Survey Questions A to E	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always
A. My students come back from recess with a good report.				1					1					1					1		0	0	0	4	0
B. My students need to be spoken to by the principal after lunch.	1					1					1						1				3	1	0	0	0
C. My students need me to speak with them several times a week.	1						1					1						1			1	2	1	0	0
D. My students do not come back to class ready for learning after recess.	1					1						1					1				2	2	0	0	0
E. My Students get along with one another and the other classes at recess.			1						1					1					1		0	0	1	3	0

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February 2002	Class 1					Class 2					Class 3					Class 4					TOTALS				
Teacher Survey Questions A to E	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always	never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always
A. My students come back from recess with a good report.			1						1					1					1		0	0	1	3	0
B. My students need to be spoken to by the principal after lunch.	1					1					1						1				3	1	0	0	0
C. My students need me to speak with them several times a week.		1					1					1						1			0	3	1	0	0
D. My students do not come back to class ready for learning after recess.		1					1					1					1				0	4	0	0	0
E. My Students get along with one another and the other classes at recess.				1					1					1						1	0	0	0	3	1

Second Grade Student Recess Survey

October 2001	Class 1			Class 2			Class 3			Class 4			TOTALS		
Student Survey Questions 1 to 10	yes	no	some times	yes	no	some times	yes	no	some times	yes	no	some times	yes	no	some times
1. I speak kindly and politely to others even when I am angry	9	0	10	9	1	8	5	2	11	12	1	4	35	4	33
2. When I make a mistake I admit I am wrong.	7	1	11	10	3	5	13	3	2	8	1	8	38	8	26
3. It is okay to leave students out of a game.	1	16	2	3	14	1	2	13	3	2	13	2	8	56	8
4. If I see someone doing something seriously wrong I should tell an adult.	16	2	1	17	0	1	17	0	1	15	1	1	65	3	4
5. If I don't agree with the rules I should still follow them.	16	0	3	18	0	0	15	0	3	12	1	4	61	1	10
6. I would go out of my way to welcome a new student during lunchtime.	19	0	0	10	1	7	15	1	2	10	1	6	54	3	15
7. It is okay to keep something you find and not look for its owner.	0	18	1	2	11	5	1	15	2	2	14	1	5	58	9
8. It is okay to tease others who are different.	0	19	0	1	17	0	0	18	0	0	14	3	1	68	3
9. I care for others who are in need.	19	0	0	18	1	0	18	0	0	16	0	1	71	1	1
10.It is okay not to listen to an adult.	1	17	1	0	14	4	0	17	1	1	12	4	2	60	10

February 2002	Class 1			Class 2			Class 3			Class 4			TOTALS		
Student Survey Questions 1 to 10	yes	no	some times	yes	no	some times	yes	no	some times	yes	no	some times	yes	no	some times
1. I speak kindly and politely to others even when I am angry	12	2	6	12	0	8	10	0	6	6	0	13	40	2	33
2. When I make a mistake I admit I am wrong.	16	1	3	16	1	3	12	0	4	10	3	6	54	5	16
3. It is okay to leave students out of a game.	4	14	2	3	14	3	1	14	1	2	15	2	10	57	8
4. If I see someone doing something seriously wrong I should tell an adult.	18	0	2	18	1	1	16	0	0	19	0	0	71	1	3
5. If I don't agree with the rules I should still follow them.	20	0	0	19	0	1	15	0	1	16	0	3	70	0	5
6. I would go out of my way to welcome a new student during lunchtime.	18	0	2	18	0	2	15	0	1	19	0	0	70	0	5
7. It is okay to keep something you find and not look for its owner.	0	17	3	1	17	2	0	14	2	2	14	3	3	62	10
8. It is okay to tease others who are different.	0	19	1	0	19	1	0	16	0	1	17	1	1	71	3
9. I care for others who are in need.	20	0	0	19	0	1	15	0	1	17	0	2	71	0	4
10.It is okay not to listen to an adult.	0	17	3	1	19	0	0	15	1	2	16	1	3	67	5

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Limitations

My class' behavior became negative while I had to be away from them and the classroom for several weeks due to my absence. When I did return to the class as their teacher I was with them on a part time basis for several more weeks. The same substitute teacher was able to be with them every morning for the half days that I came in for the afternoon sessions. This took place near the end of the study. This study involved four classes of which I had no control over three of them. I had to rely on others for information regarding their students. Researchers need to be in control of their study and I obtained 75% of my results from what I consider outside resources. Although the other classroom teachers all teach the same grade, each has her own personality and way of speaking to their students.

This study of students' behavior during recess was successful within the classes that truly embraced the character education ideals that have become prevalent within the school. Although a small but positive increase in the behavior patterns of the students' self - evaluation is evident; it does justify having the language of character education continually heard by the students throughout their school day. Having my own class involved in this study became a challenge for me as their teacher, to almost ensure that their student behavior away from me during

their school day would prove that they could maintain positive behaviors while having recess with their lunch aide. The students, teachers and lunch aides were re-surveyed the week I returned to my classroom full time. I needed to stay within my research time line and the results from my lunch aide proved to reflect the negative behaviors displayed during their recess time. However, on a whole, the second graders comprising all four classes had a definitive, yet small increase in positive student behaviors during their recess period.

Discussion of the Literature

Second graders typically do tease one another as part of their social interaction as well as push one another while waiting their turns to get on playground equipment. These are typical negative recess behaviors noted by Diane McIntyre Wilbur in her article titled, "Finding Ways to Foster Ethical Behavior in Youth", (2000). Changing a school culture can change behaviors as well as academic achievement. Our school has a character – building program called "Project Wisdom", that enhances the school culture, builds self-esteem by motivating students to do their personal best, and builds community by inspiring the students to contribute to the world around them while honoring the diversity that makes our world great. Most importantly, the program builds character by encouraging ethical thinking. After listening to a short story and quote read by a faculty member students are reminded that they need to take responsibility for their

actions by the choices they make. Diane McIntyre Wilbur (2000) strongly believes a character education program is needed starting at the elementary school level where many children come to school not having been taught the character traits of honesty, kindness or right from wrong.

At the end of this study the children did interact with one another in a more positive manner. They began to understand the "language" of character education. At the end of the daily "Project Wisdom" readings the students began to say the phrase along with the reader, "With something to think about, this is *name of narrator.* Make it a great day. . . or not. The choice is yours". When conflicts arise they know they have a choice in their actions. Dr. Marlowe Ediger (1998) believes students need to be involved in their own evaluation. Having students make good choices in their behavior during their recess time and having them be responsible for their choices can lead to intrinsic motivation. Dr. Ediger (1998) believes it is this intrinsic motivation that is important in order to have students achieve cognitively as well as in the areas of character education. Young children do want to please their teachers, however, that is not reason enough to display positive behaviors. Children learn that making positive choices will impact not only their lives, but will affect the interaction of those around them.

Recommendations

Research on linking student behavior with a character education program would be more effective if the study involved only one group or class of students. This study involved four classes of which I had no control over three of them. I can honestly talk about my own group of students but had to rely on others for information. The researcher needs to be in control of his/her study and I obtained 75% of my results from what I consider outside sources. Although the other classroom teachers all teach the same grade, each has her own personality and way of speaking to their students. Character education mini lessons were to be done throughout the week, however, this researcher cannot be sure if all second grade students were exposed to the same character building language. The only consistent lessons heard by all students are the daily "Project Wisdom" readings. There are videos, books and songs available with lesson plans for all teachers within the school; however, it is not mandatory for them to use this material.
I recommend a mandatory school – wide character education curriculum with grade level books, songs and lesson plans. There are many opportunities throughout any given school day when a teachable moment occurs and a character building lesson can occur at that as well. Another implication involved the lunch aides who supervise the second graders at their recess time. Although there is an

established set of discipline procedures; each lunch aide deals with conflicts that arise in a different manner.

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Appendix A
Parental Permission Letter

Dear Parents,

This school year our school district is instituting a character education program dealing with the character traits of responsibility, respect, integrity and kindness. There will be on going evaluations of this program through the use of surveys, which will be given out to each school community, by the district office.

I am currently doing a research study of my own for a graduate program on this very topic of character education. My focus will be of second grade student behavior during their recess period (lunchtime). Each classroom lunch aide will evaluate the behavior of the class as a whole during the time they have lunch and recess in the beginning of the school year and then again at the end of our year. The children will also evaluate their own behaviors toward one another in the beginning and at the end of their school year as well.

Please take the time to sign the permission slip below allowing your child to participate in this study.

Sincerely,
Marsha Howard
Second Grade Teacher

Student Name _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Teacher _____

Appendix B
Student Character Education Survey

Answer Code:

Yes No Sometimes

1. I speak kindly and politely to others even when I am angry.

2. When I make a mistake I admit I am wrong.

3. It is okay to leave students out of a game.

4. If I see someone doing something seriously wrong I should tell an adult.

5. If I don't agree with the rules I should still follow them.

6. I would go out of my way to welcome a new student during lunchtime.

7. It is okay to keep something you find and not look for its owner.

8. It is okay to tease others who are different.

9. I care for others who are in need.

10. It is okay not to listen to an adult.

Appendix C
Lunch Supervisor Character Education Survey

Answer Codes:
1= never 2= rarely 3=sometimes 4=usually 5=always

1) My class speaks kindly to one another.

1 2 3 4 5

2) My class follows the outdoor recess rules.

1 2 3 4 5

3) My class observes indoor recess rules.

1 2 3 4 5

4) My class teases the other classes at recess.

1 2 3 4 5

5) My class can wait their turn at recess.

1 2 3 4 5

Lunch Supervisor _____

Teacher _____

Appendix D
Teacher Character Education Recess Survey

Answer Code:

1=never 2=rarely 3=sometimes 4=usually 5=always

1) My students comes back from recess with a good report from the lunch supervisor.

1 2 3 4 5

2) My students need to be spoken to by the school principal after recess.

1 2 3 4 5

3) My students need me to speak with them several days a week about their recess behavior.

1 2 3 4 5

4) My students do not come back to class ready for learning after recess.

1 2 3 4 5

5) My students get along with one another and the other classes at recess.

1 2 3 4 5

Teacher_____

REFLECTION

At the end of this task I know I have consummated an extensive learning experience that will enable me to initiate research inquiry in my school community as an administrator and/or as a fellow colleague. I have been describing myself lately as a lifelong learner with a never-ending journey. In our field of education, educators are continuously searching for improved learning strategies to help our students reach their potential. To be a better educator I know I must continue to seek out other avenues of information to acquire the knowledge I will need to continue to be effective in the classroom and as a school administrator.

I need to apologize to my family because I am not multitasked when it involved my graduate work. I truly hope they understand how important this work was to me and why our family activities had to be scheduled around my graduate work timelines.

Character education is not a new ideal, just a forgotten one that can become part of who we all are. It is up to parents and educators to bring back the essential communication and social skills to guide the young children of today into a more peaceful and safe community and world around them.

Biographical Statement

Marsha Howard

After obtaining my BA in elementary education in the early 70's from Brooklyn College in New York City, I did not obtain an immediate teaching position. However, what my teaching degree did entitle me to do was to work for a word processing corporation using my teaching skills to train secretaries on how to use their new technological office equipment.

Several years later I met my husband, married and had two children. I was fortunate at the time to be able to stay at home with my son and daughter and raise them through their primary years under my care.

Our family moved to New Jersey in the mid 1980's and when my son entered first grade I slowly came back to the teaching field. I obtained my New Jersey teaching certificate by taking the National Teaching Exam and started to substitute in the district where my children attended school. I was offered a Kindergarten position and taught that grade from 1992 to 2001. I had the opportunity to change my teaching grade level to second grade for the 2001 – 2002 school year. It has been a rewarding experience for me to witness how the students' foundational experience in Kindergarten prepared them for the following two years of school. This particular school year I have been honored with The Governor's Teacher of the Year Award at my elementary school where I work.

It was important to me and for my career to educate myself further on the latest "trends" in the elementary school field; and so I completed a Masters program through Seton Hall University in December 2000.

I knew even before I finished that Masters program that I would continue further with my career and decided on an administrative path. That decision has brought me to where I am today and will hopefully carry me further after this summer. With the support of my family and friends I am ready for any new challenges that await me.

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